

Men win opener; drop two straight

by Julie Stocker
Assistant Sports Editor

As we return from stuffing our faces with Thanksgiving turkey, a group of young men were busy playing basketball.

Despite starting the season with a convincing 90-66 victory over the Thiel Tomcats, Behrend (1-2) dropped their last two games.

Tuesday evening, Behrend opened up their season at home as they tangled with the SUNY-Fredonia Devils. Fredonia proved to be evil as the Devils heated Behrend 67-55.

"We just did not guard people the way we're capable of and we let them go on a little bit of a run mid-way through the first half that put the game away," said Coach Dave Niland.

"We clearly out played them in the second half, but you can't dig yourself out of a 15-point hole," continued Niland.

Number 22 was wild as each team's double-deuce jersey wearer finished with team-high honors. Forward Anthony Costantini lead Behrend with 15 points, while Fredonia senior guard Lee Giardini matched Behrend's high-man with 15 points and seven rebounds of his own.

Guard Jason Paloskey provided the Lions with a spark off the bench as he mounted 11 points and four boards.

"Fredonia is a good basketball team that will win a lot of games this season," Niland confessed. "They play very hard defensively,

and [Fredonia] is probably the best team we'll face all year."

For the game, the Devils out-rebounded the Lions by a 41-29 margin.

"Rebounding is a concern," said Niland. "But we have to play to our strengths, and we just don't have the size or strength we did last year."

As the Lions put their show on the road right before the holiday break, their next stop was Hilbert College. Despite Behrend's 31-28 halftime lead, the Lions were tripped 64-58.

"We didn't perform offensively, and took a lot of bad shots. That always leads to good shots for the other team. We also let a couple of [Hilbert's] guys get hot," remarked a saddened Niland.

Costantini again had the hot hand for Behrend, as he led the charge with 23 points, while hitting three of four shots from three-point range. Forward Ron Derian was next with 13 points and four rebounds, and forward Steve Adams collected 10 points.

Paloskey went three-for-three from the field to finish with seven points to again provide support in a reserve role.

"We really struggled with shooting the basketball on the road [at Hilbert], and we had a lot of open shots that we didn't make," said Niland.

In the Thiel win, however, Behrend had all cylinders clicking, as three Lions roared for double figures. In fact, 11 of the 13 Lions received recognition in the scoring column.

Derian led the offensive attack with 18 points and nine rebounds. The junior also managed to steal the basketball four times.

Center Brian Perkins followed Derian's lead with 15 points of his own, while hauling in seven boards. Costantini notched 14 markers and cleaned the glass with six rebounds.

"We executed very well and we passed the ball effectively," said Niland. "We guarded [Thiel] well on defense and forced a lot of turnovers."

Behrend was on fire in the first half, shooting 51 percent from the floor (18-35), while the defense kept Thiel shooting to a dismal 31 percent (9-29). Coach Niland's crew entered the locker room with a 53-34 halftime lead.

The shooting for Behrend cooled off in the second half, but the defense stayed hot, as the Lions shot 47 percent from the

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Coach Niland

floor for the game, and the stingy defense held the 'Cats to 32 percent shooting for the contest.

Only one Thiel player, guard Tyrone Gissentaner, reached double figure scoring, as he finished the evening with 11 points.

"This was a great start to our season," said Niland. "The guys know that what we are doing works, and if we do the things

the right way, we're okay."

"We executed everything very well, and we played the tough hard-nosed [defense] that we are capable of playing," commented Derian.

Through the first three games of this young season, Niland has cited the progress of some of the freshmen members on the squad.

"Freshmen are freshmen," started Niland. "Whether you're talking about freshmen at Kentucky or Penn State-Behrend, it's the land of confusion until they adjust to college and college basketball."

But here at Behrend, (more so than at UK) Niland, not Pitino, is forced to make the young Lions a vital part of the success of the team. And he has confidence in doing it.

"I'd put our five freshmen, who were on the floor for segments of each of our three games, against any Division III freshmen in the country. They've done a great job," praised Niland.

Niland, "the Fab Frosh," and the rest of the Lions have the annual Hamot Classic next on their agenda, as it is slated for this weekend.

"There are definitely signs of progress," said Niland. "It takes time, and we haven't had a lot of time together. We'll just have to execute effectively [this weekend] in order to be successful."

In the opening game of the Hamot Classic, Pitt-Bradford will battle Adrian at 6:00 p.m., and the Lions will claw with Bethany in the nightcap at 8:00 p.m.

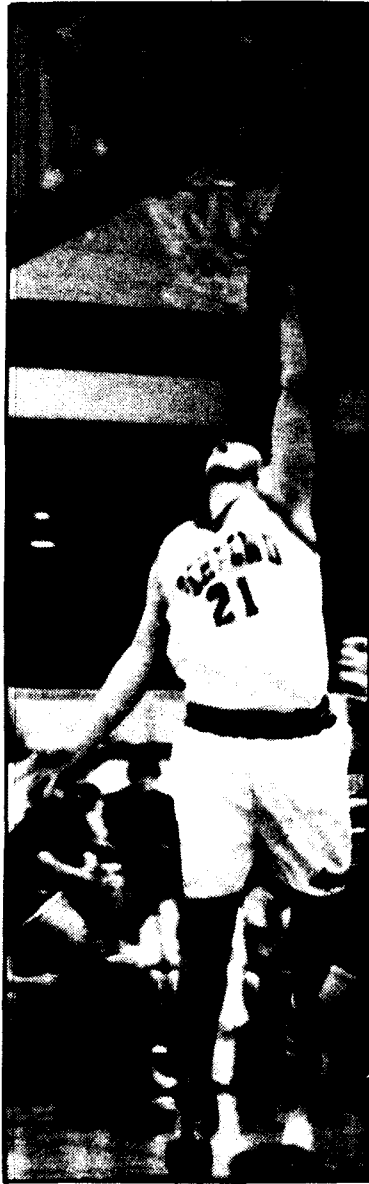


Photo by Dave Boulos/Collegian Staff
To the reverse: ATW
Ron Derian up for two.

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am 1450

Tonight - 6:05 p.m.
Nittany Lion Hotline

Thursday Night NFL
NY Giants v. Arizona - 7:45 p.m.

Friday Night
Behrend Basketball - 8:00 p.m.

Monday Night Football
"WPSE's Touchdown Talk" - 8:06 p.m.
Chicago v. Detroit - 8:45 p.m.

Wednesday - Noon: Rae Lewis Thorton
"Facing AIDS-Stereotypes & Myths"

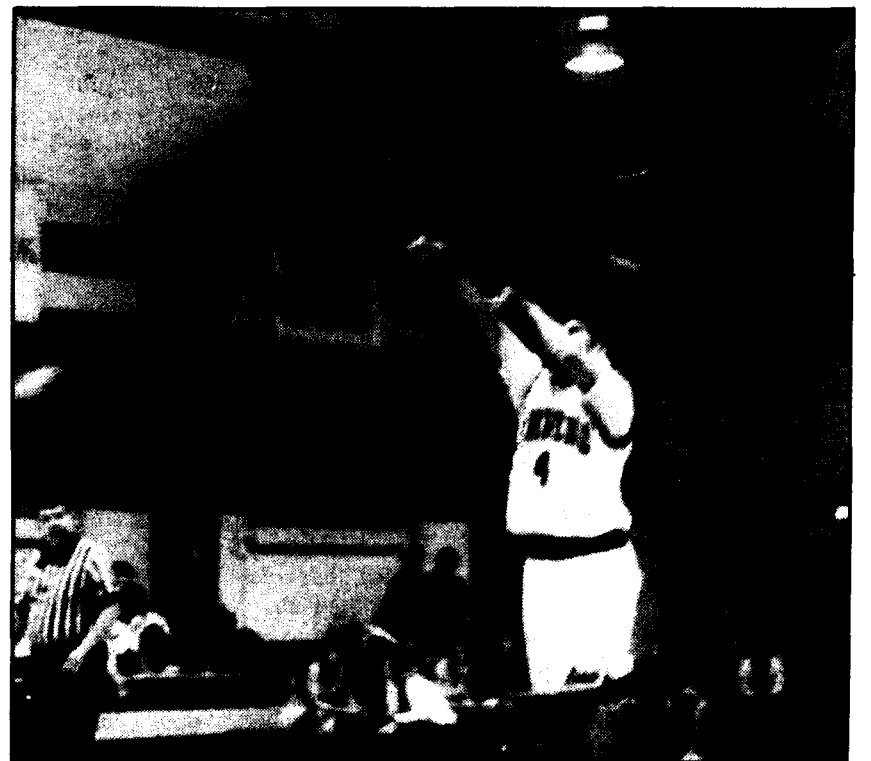


Photo by Dave Boulos/Collegian Photographer

The house that Sutton built: Chad Sutton throws up a long range bomb and a prayer. See Sutton and the Lions in action this weekend in the annual Hamot Classic, as they take on Bethany Friday evening at 8:00 p.m.



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